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## Teaching poetry writing in the primary grades

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## Teaching poetry writing in the primary grades

### Abstract

This project examines the use of poetry to teach writing and the impact this instruction has on the primary classroom. The purpose of this project is to explore poetry instruction, examine how it has traditionally been taught, and provide professional development to classroom teachers that focuses on the effective use of poetry instruction in the classroom. The professional development sessions include Power Point presentations, small and large group discussions, and practical classroom application. Benefits and challenges of poetry instruction are also provided.

TEACHING POETRY WRITING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

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Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

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By

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	5
Introduction.....	6
Methodology.....	9
Review of the Literature.....	11
The Project.....	27
Conclusions/Recommendations.....	39
References.....	40
Appendix A: Session One Power Point Slides .....	42
Appendix B: Example Poem.....	46
Appendix C: Bibliography of Children's Poetry Books.....	48
Appendix D: Presenting a Poem to Your Classroom Reflection .....	50
Appendix E: Session Evaluation.....	52
Appendix F: Presenting a Poem Lesson Reflection.....	54
Appendix G: Session Two Power Point Slides.....	56
Appendix H: Possible Lesson Sequence for Poetry Instruction.....	59
Appendix I: Shared Writing Lesson Reflection.....	62
Appendix J: Session Three Power Point Slides.....	64
Appendix K: Student Written Poem.....	67
Appendix L: Independent Writing Lesson Reflection.....	69
Appendix M: Session Four Power Point Slides.....	71
Appendix N: Extending the Learning Reflection.....	73
Appendix O: Final Evaluation.....	75

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1 Correlation Between Writing Stages and Spelling Stages.....	16
2 Teaching Poetry Writing to Primary Students.....	29

## Introduction

My project explores using poetry in primary classrooms in order to teach writing and presenting this information to primary teachers through a series of professional development seminars. In developing this project, I investigated the best ways to teach poetry, what poetry instruction has looked like and could look like, the benefits and drawbacks of using this genre, and the most beneficial way in which teachers learn. The professional development series I created consists of four seminars, which include Power Point presentations, interactive learning, large and small group discussion, and practical classroom implementation.

### *Rationale for Choosing Topic*

Writing and writing instruction have always been a passion of mine and the writing instruction in my district lacked standard curriculum. Because of this, I was looking for a way to add another dimension to what these students were doing in terms of independent writing. Poetry, and the use of this genre in writing instruction, has always been something that has interested me. I was never taught how to use poetry in my classroom, aside from reading it aloud to students, but I always enjoyed writing poetry, even as a young child. As I began reading about this area of literacy, I realized that students are not only capable of reading poetry, they are capable of writing poetry at a variety of grade levels (Tannenbaum, 2000). Creating a professional development series was a great way for me to share the knowledge and information I had gained to help other teachers teach their students a different way to express themselves through writing. I thought presenting the tenets of effective poetry instruction through four carefully crafted



professional development workshops would be the most effective method to reach the most students.

### *Purpose of the Project*

The purpose of this project was to explore primary level poetry instruction and to prepare a professional development series that would explain in detail the best ways to teach poetry writing and allow time for practical application in classrooms. It was important to me that teachers be given time to learn about poetry instruction, use what they learned in their classroom, and then come back again to discuss with other teachers what went well and what could be improved upon, enabling them to continue exploring the topic in depth. This project is designed with the classroom teacher in mind, providing useful and practical information that teachers would feel comfortable implementing immediately in their classrooms.

### *Importance of the Project*

Many teachers are reluctant to teach poetry for fear of doing it wrong, feeling inadequate as a writer themselves, or for lacking understanding of the genre (Tannenbaum, 2000). Because of this, poetry writing is often removed from the classroom. I found that the teachers I worked with shared these feelings of apprehension and inadequacy. Many of them thought their students were too young to write poetry or would not understand it. They also felt that because they were not poets, they didn't feel equipped to teach students how to become poets themselves. Because of these feelings of inadequacies, I thought it was important to explore the best practices in poetry instruction and to provide support that would increase teachers' confidence in the use of poetry in the classroom.

### *Terminology*

In this project, a variety of terms will be used in regards to poetry instruction. The first key term is poetry. *Poetry* is a form of writing that uses especially concentrated and connotative language (Booth & Moore, 2003). Poetry is an art that allows the reader to see differently and develop new understandings. *Shared writing* is another term used throughout the project. Shared writing is a language experience technique used in primary classrooms (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In this form of writing, the teacher composes a piece along with the students, often about a common experience, and acts as the recorder. The teacher's role is to be a model for the students.

### *Goals*

My interest in writing poetry and poetry instruction led to the creation of four professional development sessions. Through these sessions, I hope to achieve the following goals:

- 1) To inform and educate teachers about poetry and poetry instruction
- 2) To build teachers' confidence in teaching poetry writing
- 3) To help teachers improve student writing

These goals guided the creation of my professional development series.

## Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology for locating and selecting the sources used for my literature review. In reviewing the literature, I hoped to gain insight into the best practices used for teaching poetry writing, what methods had previously been used to teach poetry writing, and the best and most effective ways of working with teachers in professional development seminars. I used a variety of search terms, ranging from broad to more specific, as I worked throughout the process.

### *Methods for Locating Sources*

Two major databases were used throughout the process of locating resources. These were Education Full Text (Wilson) and ERIC (EBSCO). The searches were based on these keywords and a variety of combinations of these words: *poetry instruction, writing instruction, professional development, primary grades, struggling writers, writing stages, spelling stages, creative writing, shared writing, and writing strategies*. After sources were located using these databases and keywords, I used the reference lists to broaden my research. These terms were chosen using my primary and secondary research questions.

### *Methods for Selecting Sources*

The sources selected for use in my project were sources I considered to be the most useful and pertinent to my project. I looked for recent research-based articles from published journals and books in the field of education. My research started broadly with writing instruction and professional development and then honed in specifically on poetry instruction in the primary grades and best practices for professional development with educators. As sources were collected, they were coded according to which aspect of

poetry instruction they addressed and which aspect of professional development was addressed.

### Review of the Literature

Writing is a tool of communication that has been used throughout all of history (Murphy, 2001). In education, writing is used to convey meaning (Barone & Taylor, 2006), inspire thought (Tannenbaum, 2000) and display creativity (Stone, 2007). Using poetry in the classroom encourages students to do these things in a way that is all their own (Tannenbaum, 2000). Many teachers are reluctant to teach poetry for fear of doing it wrong, feeling inadequate as a writer themselves, or for lacking understanding of the genre. This literature review looks at the teaching of writing and how using poetry can impact that teaching. In the writing instruction section, many elements of writing are outlined. The stages of writing, best practices in spelling instruction, and methods for teaching poetry are explored.

### *Writing Instruction*

A key element of writing instruction is the foundation of the system of writing (Murphy, 2001). Knowing where and how writing began and how it has been taught in the past can help teachers understand where students have been and where they need to go.

*Foundations.* The writing systems in this world represent one of the most powerful human instincts (Murphy, 2001). Murphy believes that writing must be taught and, unlike oral language, has to be acquired through education. Writing instruction began in ancient Greece. It was seen as a technology, a recording device for documenting historical events. In order to do so, the Greeks created a writing system (Murphy, 2001). This alphabet was easy to learn and was a vehicle for reconstructing speech. The creation

of this alphabet led to systemized writing instruction and the beginning of literate communities (Murphy, 2001).

Learning to write, though, is a journey over time (Schickedanz, 1999). It is a process that involves much more than just writing down the letters of the alphabet. Schickendanz (1999) contends that children need to gain an understanding of several elements of writing in order to be successful. These include the level of speech represented by the letters of the alphabet and how print is organized on a page. Children must also understand why writing is used and the conventions utilized for these purposes. Understanding that a writer must also think about the reader's reaction to the writing is also essential. This learning occurs over time during much of a student's elementary and secondary years.

Clay (1975) outlines six principles that guide the acquisition of writing in a child's development. These are recurring principle, directional principle, generating principle, inventory principle, contrastive principle, and abbreviation principle. The recurring principle finds that writing is repeated to help establish habitual response patterns. Repeating a known letter or word over and over produces a sense of accomplishment and competence. The directional principle deals with developing the patterns of left to right and top to bottom. Understanding that this is how writing works is essential for young writers. The generating principle states that a learner will extend their writing repertoire by combining elements of writing in an inventive fashion. Taking a variety of known letters or signs and stringing them together to form words. The inventory principle deals with learners taking stock of their knowledge of writing by making lists. Some examples would be lists of known letters, lists of names, or lists of

words all beginning with the same letter. The contrastive principle states that children can make contrasts between several things at different levels. These could include shapes, letters, sounds or patterns. Being able to take stock of known items and regroup is a huge part of this principle. The abbreviation principle is seen when a child comprehends that letters can stand for words. It refers to a deliberate attempt to use one symbol to imply a full word.

While Clay outlines guiding principles for a child's acquisition of writing, Heenman (1985) has identified five developmental stages that young children go through when learning to write: scribble stage, isolated letter stage, transitional stage, stylized sentence stage, and the writing stage. The first stage is the scribble stage. These random marks are produced and children use them to convey meaning (Heenman, 1985; Schickendanz, 1999). This play writing may look like letters or pictures (Latham, 2002).

As children continue to write, they advance into the isolated letter stage, where the writer attempts to string together numbers, symbols, and letter forms. At this stage of writing there is little or no sound-symbol correspondence (Heenman, 1985). For example, a student may write "A3bmTwhI9," though all shapes may not be recognizable to the reader. When young writers are in this stage, writing may be uneven and students may be using some recognizable shapes. In this stage, it is important to help students maintain the desire to write and communicate. Providing support in order to keep them focused on writing for meaning, rather than having accurate encoding, is essential (Latham, 2002). This can be done through a variety of strategies.

The transitional stage emerges as the child begins to use some correctly spelled words, but continues to use isolated letters, symbols and numerals to convey meaning



(Heenman, 1985). The child can often read these messages but may need to pictures in order to do so. They may also read it differently at different times.

In the stylized sentence stage, the child is using repetitive patterns, anchored with known words (Heenman, 1985). Spaces are left between words and there is evidence of letter-sound knowledge. The child can often read these messages without picture support. A student may write “I like the ball or I see my mom”. The child may repeat these sentences replacing certain words but continuing to use known sight words.

In the final stage, the writing stage, the child is composing messages independently for varying purposes (Heenman, 1985). The child may be writing letters, lists, journal entries, or stories. Ideas are organized in a logical and chronological fashion. Sentences become complex, a variety of punctuation appears, both approximated and conventional spellings are used, and the voice of the writer begins to emerge. It is in this stage when the majority of writing instruction can occur through the utilization of a variety of teaching practices. A key aspect of this instruction is spelling (Gentry & Gillet, 1993). Just as young writers go through five stages of writing development, spelling has five stages of development as well.

*Spelling.* Five stages of spelling development have been identified by Gentry and Gillet (1993). These stages are closely aligned with the developmental stages of writing. The first stage, the precommunicative stage, is where the child uses random letters with no letter-sound correspondence. Spacing between letters is not used and most letters are written in uppercase. This stage is closely aligned with the isolated letter stage in writing.

In the semiphonetic stage, the child recognizes that letters have sounds but whole words may only be represented with one, two, or three letters (Gentry & Gillet, 1993).



There is a mix of upper and lower case letters and letter names are used to represent sounds or syllables. In this stage, spacing between words begins to emerge. This stage is closely aligned with the transitional stage of writing. Students are beginning to connect sounds and letters and starting to form words but are not yet completely aware of all sounds in a word.

The phonetic stage is where the child records letters for every sound contained in a word (Gentry & Gillet, 1993). Spacing and directional movement are generally under control and the writing may contain some words spelled phonetically or semi-phonetically. Some words may be spelled correctly. This stage of spelling aligns with the fourth stage of writing, the stylized sentence stage.

The fourth stage is the transitional stage (Gentry & Gillet, 1993). In this stage, children begin to look at how a word looks visually, rather than how it sounds, in order to use it in their writing. Children may use alternative spellings for certain sounds, increase the use of inflectional endings, reverse visual patterns, put a vowel in every syllable, and have control of known words. The final stage of writing aligns with this transitional stage as well as the final stage of spelling, the conventional stage.

In the fifth and final stage, the conventional stage, the child has established firm control of letter-sound knowledge (Gentry & Gillet, 1993). A variety of word structures are used and when a word does not *look right* a child is able to come up with an alternative spelling. In this stage, a child is able to use outside resources, such as a dictionary, and has accumulated a large writing vocabulary.

The correlations between the writing stages and the spelling stages are outlined in Table 1. Taking into account these stages of spelling and of writing are important as a

teacher embarks on the process of teaching children how to write poetry. Tannenbaum (2000) points out that in the early stages of poetry instruction, invented spelling and abbreviations are fine. This early stage of poetry focuses on the process more than the final product (Tannenbaum, 2000). Editing the product should come later. Reminding students of this and allowing them to explore spelling in their own way helps the process of poetry writing.

Table 1

*Correlation Between Writing Stages and Spelling Stages*

Writing Stages	Spelling Stages
Scribble Stage – random marks, possibly letters or pictures	
Isolated letter stage – strings of letters, numbers, symbols and letter forms	Precommunicative stage – random letters with no letter-sound correspondence
Transitional stage – some correctly spelled words, some isolated letters, symbols, and numerals	Semiphonetic stage – words represented with one, two, or three letters
Stylized sentence stage – repetitive patterns with known words, some spacing between words	Phonetic stage – letters recorded for every sound in a word, some correctly spelled words, some spacing
Writing stage – complex sentences, variety of punctuation, both approximated and conventional spellings	Transitional stage – alternative spellings may be used, control of known words, use of inflectional endings and visual patterns
	Conventional stage – firm control of letter-sound knowledge established

*Methods for Writing Instruction*

There are a variety of strategies that can be used for supporting emergent writing (Latham, 2002). The purposes of these early writing strategies are to create a situation where students take risks, and where teachers demonstrate effective writing strategies, and help children learn how to apply their existing knowledge in order to problem solve with new information and in a variety of places (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998). Three strategies in particular have emerged as being very beneficial in teaching writing: teacher-scribe, shared writing, and interactive writing. These strategies slowly release the responsibility of writing to the student with teacher support being given throughout.

Teacher-scribe is a strategy where the teacher does the encoding, according to a child's dictation. The writing is read together and the child may or may not trace or copy the writing (Latham, 2002). The responsibility of physically writing the story rests with the teacher while the oral composition is in the hands of the student. Taking the responsibility of encoding away from the student opens the child's mind up to focusing on the content.

Shared writing is completed with a whole class. The teacher does the writing for the group using children contributions and reads it back to the class (Latham, 2002). The teacher and students share the construction of the writing (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Through this strategy, the teacher is able to take the ideas students present, combine them with other ideas, and rework them into a cohesive product. This demonstrates the brainstorming process, the writing process, and the editing process in one sitting.

Interactive writing is done with a teacher and a small group of children (Dorn, French, & Jones, 1998). In this activity, students have their own colored marker with which they contribute known letters and words, and the teacher does the rest of the writing with a separate color. The purposes of interactive writing are to show children how to make meaning with writing, to support students in writing the sounds we hear in words, to demonstrate the use of punctuation and directionality, and to create something students will want to read over and over again (Schaefer, 2001). This practice is one of the best places to start the writing process with emergent writers because the teacher is teaching while the students are getting the opportunity to explore the act of writing (Schaefer, 2001).

These strategies can guide students through the process by releasing the responsibility of writing to the student gradually, from the teacher being responsible for most of the work, moving to shared writing, and finally to the students being responsible for most of the work. Using these strategies, teacher-scribe, shared writing, and interactive writing with the teaching of poetry can be very beneficial because these strategies help to prepare students for writing independently.

### *Methods for Poetry Instruction*

In many classrooms, poetry is definitely at the periphery of the curriculum, if it is even used at all (Sloan, 2003). Poetry is a genre that is not only accessible to primary children but can be the genre that excites children and motivates them to read and write. Poetry is able to do so in a simple way. This form of writing lures children in (Schaefer, 2001).

When using poetry in the classroom, it is important to incorporate it on a regular basis in order to keep students' imaginations involved and to keep students engaged in their learning (Edwards, Maloy, & Verock-O'Loughlin, 2003). It should be an everyday event (Bridges, 1997). This can be done through reading, writing, and listening to poetry. Having a collection of poetry in the classroom that is enjoyed again and again is a great way to begin exposing children to a variety of poems and formats (Schaefer, 2001). Rather than relegating poetry writing to a one-time unit, a teacher should make it a vital, ongoing component of the reading and writing curriculum (Routman, 2000).

Tannenbaum (2000) suggests a variety of general principles to follow when teaching poetry in the classroom. Poetry relies heavily on concrete descriptions as opposed to abstract. For example, instead of saying that the girl's eyes were beautiful it is more effective in poetry to compare the blue to something or describe the color. Helping children to get beyond a simple statement and developing it further is one way a teacher can support a student's writing.

Another guiding principle in poetry instruction is that poems are written to express ideas, not to conform to a sense of correctness or to a notion of being right (Tannenbaum, 2000). In this type of writing, spelling should not be a focus, and teachers should give suggestions, not assignments. In fact, sometimes mistakes can make a poem better. Instead of assigning students to write a specific kind of poem, fill in a blank, or change it in a certain way, a teacher should allow them to choose their path and use their imagination (Tannenbaum, 2000). While doing so, teachers should be sure to watch for students who are stuck or who continue to write about only one topic or one type of poem. In the classroom, when reading student-created or published poetry, it is important

for the teacher to ask students what they notice in the poem. Such discussions bring out features that may help students in writing their own poetry (Tannenbaum, 2000). If students are not noticing something important, it is appropriate for the teacher to point it out to them. As in spelling and writing, poetry has developmental stages that can be addressed for poetry instruction: examining poems, demonstrating poetry writing, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing.

The most beneficial way to begin poetry instruction is through examining poems written by others (Schaefer, 2001). Every writer of poetry must first be a reader of poetry (Heard, 1989). Having students identify elements of strong poetry allows them to think about poetry in a different way, beyond just reading it. Ray (1999) found that it's important to encourage students to read poetry like writers, to learn from the poets and their individual styles. According to Schaefer (2001), poems should be ones that students could see themselves writing, moving beyond just rhyming poems. Most poetry published for primary age children rhymes (Schaefer, 2001). This makes it difficult for students to understand that poems do not need to rhyme.

Understanding poetry beyond rhyming is important in the next stage of poetry instruction. Demonstrating and modeling the writing of poetry allows children to explore some of the most important elements of poetry writing: meaning, word choice, images, rhythm and emotion (Schaefer, 2001).

After examining and demonstrating poetry writing, shared writing is a way for the teacher to guide students through the process (Tannenbaum, 2000). This teaching strategy allows the teacher and the students to share the responsibility of constructing and



recording the poem. Writing as a class allows for students to take risks together and for students who are still apprehensive to be a part of the process.

Tannenbaum (2000) suggests that as children write, it is important for the teacher to circulate the room, watching for students who are stuck. The teacher must not get caught up in spelling and mechanics but should deepen the teaching by reading students' poems and making changes. The teacher's role is to guide them and help them expand their thinking in order to understand the process of writing poetry on a much deeper level (Tannenbaum, 2000).

Finally, allowing students to write independently gives them opportunities to apply what they have learned (Tannenbaum, 2000). Children should be given time to write often. Exposing students to another form of writing and encouraging this thinking is beneficial on many levels but can also present some challenges.

### *Benefits and Challenges in Teaching Poetry*

Poetry instruction in the classroom presents both benefits and challenges to educators. One benefit is that poetry is accessible by all children. The length and text is manageable and the wordplay that many poems contain allows all children to succeed (Edwards, Maloy, & Verock-O'Loughlin, 2003). This is particularly true for those students who encounter difficulties when reading and writing. It is possible for every child to be a poet and that is empowering (Calkins, 1994).

Another benefit is that "when children start reading, listening to, and writing poetry the wonder and magic of the language captivates them and they demand more" (Edwards, Maloy, & Verock-O'Loughlin, 2003). Children want to continue exploring the genre and keeping students engaged in any text for an extended amount of time is a

benefit most educators do not expect. Writing can often be a challenging subject to get students excited about because of the level of difficulty it presents some students and the number of things that a student needs to understand in order to do so. Booth & Moore (2003) found that the more children write, the deeper the children become involved in the search for meaning.

Along with the benefits, teachers face challenges when choosing to teach poetry writing (Tannenbaum, 2000). Many teachers are concerned that this form of writing is not covered on standardized tests or that many states do not include this in their state language arts framework. Because of this, teachers are apprehensive about including it in the curriculum. With so much focus on test scores, many teachers believe that much of the instructional time in a day needs to go to directly teaching the concepts students will be tested on. Teaching how to write poetry, however, goes beyond tests. Poetry teaches children that the world of imagination is important and that the creative ideas they have are valued (Tannenbaum, 2000).

Another challenge many teachers face is a lack of knowledge about how to teach poetry (Tannenbaum, 2000). Poetry is one of the most difficult areas of writing for teachers and students (Barone & Taylor, 2006). Poetry instruction is rarely a part of teacher preparation. It is also something that many teachers were not taught how to do as students. This lack of knowledge on the topic causes many teachers to be apprehensive about teaching this form of writing.

Because of these challenges, guidance on how to make poetry instruction a part of the classroom curriculum is something that would be beneficial to all teachers. This can be done through effective professional development.



*Professional Development*

The impact of professional development on student achievement can be quite profound. Traditionally, staff development has contained certain elements (Robb, 2000). These included one-day teacher training, a one-size-fits-all presentation, minimal administrator participation, and lack of follow-up support (Robb, 2000). This model tends to inhibit professional growth. Sessions tend to overload teachers with information, leaving them confused and unmotivated to try implementing any strategies. More often than not, the expert is not invited back to work with the teachers.

Robb (2000) found that a new model needs to be used, going from traditional inservices to professional study. Perceiving professional development in this way invites teachers to talk and reflect about their learning in order to change their thinking. It embraces the concept of lifelong learning (Robb, 2000).

Joyce and Showers (2002) found that when a community of teachers engage in the study of a useful curriculum piece for multiple days and study implementation, it is likely that student achievement will rise. Providing ample time for study and continued follow-up is crucial to the success of implementing the strategies being focused on (Robb, 2000). Joyce and Showers (2002) also found that four conditions must be present in order to affect student learning. First, a group of professionals must study, put into practice, and share the results of any professional development. Second, the content chosen to be studied in the professional development must be highly likely to impact student achievement. Third, the degree to which change is generated must be enough to make the students' gain in knowledge and skill obvious. Finally, the process that the staff

goes through must enable them to develop the skill themselves, in order to implement what they learn.

Selecting the content to be focused on in professional development is a critical decision (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Creating a *staff development council* is one way to decide what is focused on in the sessions (Joyce & Showers). This council may include teachers, principals, administrators, and possibly school board members. The content selection needs to be dictated by what a staff perceives as immediate needs. Including them in the planning process makes it more likely that they will invest time in the study (Robb, 2000). Options for study include, but are not limited to, renewing a curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, technology, or focusing on specific populations (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

An important aspect of any professional development program is the need for continued contact (Robb, 2000). Becoming proficient at something new, and finding meaning in that learning, requires time and effort (Guskey, 2002). Because of this, it is the follow-up and support that follows the initial training that is most crucial. In order for a new program or innovation to be implemented well, teachers' must be able to make it a natural part of their repertoire (Guskey, 2000). If this is to happen, the continued support and follow-up are essential. It is imperative, then, that one-day teacher training be seen as not enough (Robb, 2000). Continuing support, maintaining contact over time, and meeting with teachers more than once is a necessary component of quality professional development (Robb). Professional development needs to be seen not as merely an event, but a process (Loucks-Horsley, 1998).

Moving to a professional development model focused on collaboration and learning requires a strong commitment from administration (Robb, 2000). When trying to implement new strategies, encountering some resistance is inevitable. Making professional study a priority is essential (Robb, 2000). Administrators can focus on creating an environment that contributes to change. Conditions that should be present are positive tension and discomfort, personal commitment, a recursive process, collaboration, cooperation, inquiry, risk taking, time, reflection and evaluation, and feedback (Robb, 2000).

When planning professional development sessions presenters should establish and include specific goals (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). This allows participants to understand what the material presented is aimed at accomplishing. Within the presentation, certain elements should be included in order to make it meaningful for the audience. Some of these elements are an opening, agenda, humor, content, activities, a conclusion, and an evaluation (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). High quality professional development should also include handouts of some kind for the participants. These handouts should contain the most important information from the presentation (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). The handouts should be clean and clear and only contain the presenter's original materials. Technology today also allows us access to many visual aids that can make professional development sessions more interesting and engaging. Using PowerPoint or overhead projectors can make information easy for audiences to see and keeps them more engaged (Vogt & Shearer, 2007). Presenters should pay particular attention to the type and size of font used and any pictures or diagrams that are used, making sure things aren't too distracting to the participants.

*Summary*

Writing is a system with foundations rooted in history. In learning how to write, one goes through many stages, both in spelling and writing. It is through these stages that a student grows as a writer and begins exploring writing in its many forms.

Poetry writing has been at the periphery of writing instruction for many years. In recent years, many educators have begun to see the benefits of teaching students to write poetry and have witnessed what this form of writing can do for a student's creativity as well as how it can impact writing in other curricular areas. A variety of strategies for teaching poetry writing have come out of the research of many educators.

Teaching poetry writing presents a variety of benefits and challenges to an educator. While the benefits far outweigh the challenges, many educators are still apprehensive about teaching poetry writing in the classroom. Giving teachers access to quality professional development on the topic is seen as one way of guiding them through incorporating this instruction into the primary classroom on a regular basis.

Based on the content gleaned from this review of the literature on poetry instruction, a professional development workshop has been created entitled *Teaching Poetry Writing in the Primary Grades*. The workshop explores poetry, poetry instruction, and allows participants the opportunity to begin teaching poetry writing in their own classrooms, and is broken into four sessions.

### The Project

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the professional development project *Teaching Poetry Writing in the Primary Grades*. This project is designed for the teachers of primary grades (K-2). The sessions were created for the teachers in my district because many of them are not teaching the writing of poetry and unaware of the impact this can have on their students' writing. The workshop is divided into four different sections: *Introduction into Poetry*, *Poetry Instruction in the Primary Classroom*, *Guiding Young Writers in Poetry Writing*, and *Extending the Learning*. Through my review of literature, it was apparent that in order to become comfortable with writing and examining poetry a teacher needs to first do this themselves. This is why I will begin with instructing the teachers and then go into explaining how to teach the students. The intent of this project is to provide teachers with the knowledge and tools they need to guide their students in examining, writing, and revising their own poems.

*Preparing the Project*

Children share many of the qualities that poets possess (Booth & Moore, 2003) and because of this should be given the opportunity to write. Many primary teachers feel unprepared for teaching this form of writing (Tannenbaum, 2000). Because of this lack of knowledge, many teachers choose not to teach poetry within the writing curriculum.

From my review of literature, I found that poetry is a form of writing that can allow students to express their creativity while also allowing them to work on many writing and spelling behaviors. This information led me to create four professional development sessions centered around preparing primary educators for teaching poetry. These sessions allow teachers to understand what poetry is and its role in the classroom, to explore how to use poetry in the classroom, to apply their knowledge in the classroom, and to explore how to guide and challenge students as they develop as poetry writers. The following table provides a brief overview of the sessions to be provided in the staff development. A complete description is provided in the specific session discussions following the overview.

Table 2

*Teaching Poetry Writing to Primary Students*

<i>Session Title</i>	<i>Session Overview</i>	<i>Session Duration</i>
Session 1: Introduction to Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explanation: What poetry is</li> <li>- Poetry Instruction: The importance of poetry instruction and the impact it has on writing</li> <li>- Examination: Examine and write poetry</li> <li>- Challenge: Examine poetry with their students</li> </ul>	One hour and thirty minutes
Session 2: Poetry Instruction in the Primary Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflection: Revisit previous learning and discuss challenge results</li> <li>- Explanation: What poetry instruction looks like in the primary classroom</li> <li>- Poetry Instruction: Possible lesson sequence</li> <li>- Examination: Poetry writing as a large group</li> <li>- Challenge: Write poetry with their students as a large group.</li> </ul>	One hour and thirty minutes
Session 3: Guiding Young Writers in Poetry Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflection: Revisit previous learning and discuss challenge results</li> <li>- Explanation: General guidelines when assisting with writing poetry and editing</li> <li>- Poetry Instruction: Guiding the writing and editing with students</li> <li>- Examination: Reading child composed poetry and editing student work</li> <li>- Challenge: Have students write poems independently. Bring back samples.</li> </ul>	One hour and thirty minutes

Session 4: Extending the Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflection: Revisit previous learning and discuss challenge results</li> <li>- Explanation: Importance of continuing the poetry work</li> <li>- Poetry Instruction: Exploring other options for poetry writing</li> <li>- Examination: Read and share student writing. Discuss next steps in the learning process</li> </ul>	One hour
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*Session 1: Introduction into Poetry.*

This session will be supported by a Power Point presentation (See Appendix A). In this session teachers will be introduced to poetry and provided three different poetry activities.

*Introduction to poetry.* To begin, a short synopsis will be given of the entire series of sessions. Participants will be informed of what to expect from each session and will be given an overall goal for the series of workshops. Participants will be given the Power Point slides. My goals for the first session will be: to explain what poetry is, to provide information regarding the importance of poetry instruction and the impact it has on writing, and to provide participants with the opportunity to examine and write poetry. After presenting these goals to the teachers, we will move into the first activity.

*Activity one.* The first activity will involve asking the participants what they know about poetry. Some questions I will ask may include: where have you seen poetry? What does poetry usually look like? What does poetry usually sound like? These thoughts and ideas will be written down on large chart paper at the front of the room. After participants have shared their thoughts, I will begin talking about what poetry is and the role it plays



in society and in writing. I will share research about the importance of teaching poetry and the guiding principles in poetry instruction. After speaking about the research gleaned in my literature review, we will begin a discussion about the benefits and challenges involved in teaching poetry writing. Participants will be asked to turn to a partner and share any experiences, positive or negative, they have had with teaching poetry writing in their classroom. After allowing for a brief discussion, participants will be asked to share any thoughts. From here, the benefits and challenges I found through my research will be presented to the group.

*Activity two.* The second activity will focus on examining a poem. I will read and present a poem to the group. This poem will be given to the participants in paper form to allow them to take notes (See Appendix B). It will also be projected on the Power Point. Participants will then be given time to read the poem again on their own and will be asked to write down any thoughts, words, or feelings that come to mind when reading it. Participants will share with a partner and then will be asked to share with the group. I will guide a discussion about how to read and talk about poetry with primary students. Ideas for prompts will be given as well as ideas on how to help students think about poetry as a writer, rather than as just a reader.

*Activity three.* For the third activity, participants will be asked to select a poem from a variety of books that will be available at the session (See Appendix C for bibliography). After selecting a poem from the trade books, they will discuss with a partner how they might present this poem to their class. They will be asked to write down their thoughts and ideas (See Appendix D). This will be the poem they take back to their classroom to use for their assignment for the next session.

*Conclusion.* To complete this first session, participants will be completing a evaluation of the session (See Appendix E). Participants will also be asked to take the poem they selected back to their classroom and read it with their students. They should guide their students through a discussion and will complete a reflection at the conclusion of the lesson (See Appendix F).

*Session 2: Poetry Instruction in the Primary Classroom.*

This session will be supported by a Power Point presentation (See Appendix G). In this session teachers will reflect about the previous session, be introduced to poetry instruction and will participate in one large group poetry activity.

*Reflection.* I will begin by presenting the goals for the session to the participants.

These are to revisit the previous session challenge results, to explain what poetry instruction looks like in the primary classroom, to present a possible lesson sequence for teaching poetry writing, and to write and examine poetry. After doing so, we will revisit the learning from the previous session. Participants will be asked to share at their small group the results of the assignments they were given. After small group discussion, groups will be asked to share out with all participants what they found and how it went. Any questions that participants have about these first few steps will be addressed and recorded at this time.

*Introducing poetry instruction.* The focus for this session will be on poetry instruction in the classroom and how to guide students through the first steps of writing poetry. A synopsis of what poetry instruction looks like at the primary level will be given along with a possible sequence of lessons that can be used when launching poetry writing in the classroom. Participants will be given this sequence in handout form (See Appendix H)

*Activity one.* Within the sequence is an opportunity for doing a shared writing of poetry with students. When this comes up in the lesson sequence we will be doing an activity and writing a poem together as a group. I will lead the lesson and go through the sequence of steps that can be used when writing a poem as a group. We will first begin

by brainstorming possible topics. These topics will be recorded for reference later on.

After taking a few minutes to brainstorm, as a group we will narrow it down to one topic.

Once the topic has been selected participants will be asked to brainstorm as many things about that topic as possible. Participants will do this in pairs and will then share out with the whole group. Once the brainstorming has been recorded, writing the poem will begin.

I will guide the writing using many of the strategies being presented.

After finishing this activity, the explanation of the lesson sequence will continue.

Upon completion, we will return to the poem written as a group and have a discussion about writing poetry as a large group with students. Similarities and differences in instruction will be discussed as well as what to do when students are struggling to come up with ideas.

*Conclusion.* Participants will complete an evaluation about the session (See Appendix E) and will be asked to go back to their own classrooms and write poetry with their students in a large group setting. These poems will be brought back to the next session. Participants will be asked to fill out a lesson reflection to bring back for discussion (See Appendix I).

*Session 3: Guiding Young Writers in Poetry Writing*

Session 3 will be in the form of a Power Point presentation (See Appendix J). In this session, teachers will reflect upon the previous session, will explore guiding young writers through writing and editing poetry, and will participate in one small group activity.

*Reflection.* I will hand out the Power Point slides and begin by presenting the goals for the session to the participants. These goals are to explain general guidelines for assisting students with independent poetry writing, to explore editing student work, and to spend time editing actual student work. After doing so, we will revisit the previous session. Participants will be asked to discuss their lesson reflection with a partner, and come up with any questions they still have together. After the partner sharing, pairs will be asked to share out and bring forth any questions. These questions will be addressed and any questions that are unable to be answered will be written down to come back to. The focus for this session will be on learning about how to guide students through independent poetry writing and how to support their growth through feedback and editing. Review of the first lessons will be done before moving into the next steps. After discussing what has been done with the students, I will outline the next steps with participants.

*Introduction to poetry writing and editing.* To begin, I will explain the general guidelines for assisting with poetry writing that came out of my research. These guidelines include understanding that poetry is an expression of ideas and students should not be conforming to an idea of correctness or doing it just how a teacher wants it done (Tannenbaum, 2000). After explaining these guidelines, I will provide an example lesson

on how to help a student with writing and how to help them extend their thinking and do some editing. I will begin with an example poem written by a student (See Appendix K). I will address the participants as the student and use guiding questions to help them edit the poem.

*Activity one.* Upon completion of this portion of the session, participants will be asked to look at some student work provided to them and discuss with a partner how they might respond to that child and guide them through the editing process. Each partner will take on the role of either the teacher or the student.

*Conclusion.* To conclude the session, participants will be asked to complete an evaluation of the session (See Appendix E) and to return to their classrooms and have their students write poetry independently. Participants will complete a reflection to bring back to the next session (Appendix L). Participants will also be asked to bring back poems from three different students to use for session activities.

*Session 4: Extending the Learning*

Session 4 will be presented in the form of a Power Point presentation (See Appendix M).

In this session, teachers will reflect upon the previous session, will explore extending the student learning during poetry writing, and will participate in one small group activity.

*Reflection.* I will hand out the Power Point slides and begin by presenting the goals for the session to the participants. These goals are to explain ways to extend the learning during poetry writing and to spend time editing actual student work and planning for future lessons. After doing so, we will revisit the previous session. Participants will be asked to discuss their implementation logs with a partner, and come up with any questions they still have together. After the partner sharing, pairs will be asked to share out and bring forth any questions. These questions will be addressed at this time, if possible.

*Extending the learning.* After discussing the questions participants still had, I will present ways to extend student learning and begin introducing other forms of poetry. A variety of types of poetry will be presented. Along with teaching specific types of poetry, I will present possible mini-lessons that teachers could do to help students improve their writing. These will include using sound words, alliterations, writing in a shape, changing the size of words or letters, or doing lessons on specific types of poems such as haikus, cinquains, limericks, acrostic, or sonnets.

*Activity one.* Participants will break up into small groups. Using the student work they brought to the session, the teachers will be examining their students' poems. They will be discussing feedback that could be given to the writers and will pick areas that

would be beneficial to focus mini-lessons on in large group instruction. Each participant will be filling out a reflection form to record their ideas (See Appendix N).

*Conclusion.*

To end the session, participants will be sharing information gleaned in their small groups with the large group. Participants will be filling out a reflection form over the last teaching session (See Appendix E) and will also fill out a final evaluation over the entire workshop (See Appendix O). This evaluation will provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning as well as for me to evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions and my effectiveness as a presenter.



### Conclusions/Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the creation of the project entitled *Teaching Poetry Writing in the Primary Grades*. This staff development was created to provide the teachers in my school district information and direction on how to teach poetry writing in the primary grades. My interest in writing poetry and poetry instruction led me to seek out information and find resources regarding this form of writing. After discovering the many benefits that this instruction can have in helping students develop their creative writing, I felt there was a great need to help other educators benefit from this information as well.

By participating in this series of professional development sessions, I am hoping teachers are able to incorporate poetry writing into their writing curriculum on a regular basis, beyond delegating it to a one time unit or never having students write poetry at all. I hope they see the benefit for their own students and provide opportunities for independent poetry writing. Beyond just poetry writing, I hope participants are able to see the value in teaching creative writing at this level. I hope I am able to ignite a passion in them for guiding young writers and taking students further than current writing practices are doing. I want participants to have high expectations for their students and to challenge them in a way that they did not think was possible.

Beyond this series of sessions, I think this topic provides opportunities for continued work in poetry instruction and creative writing. I think poetry writing itself could be further developed as well as beginning to explore other forms of creative writing in order to deepen the writing curriculum at the primary level. I would be interested in pursuing this with my building or school district.

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Appendix A

Session One Power Point Slides



## INTRODUCTION INTO POETRY

Presented by:  
Staci Cramer-Wilkinson

### SYNOPSIS OF SESSIONS

- o Introduction into Poetry
- o Poetry Instruction in the Primary Classroom
- o Guiding Young Writers in Poetry Writing
- o Extending the Learning

### SESSION GOALS

- o Explain what poetry is
- o Provide information regarding the importance of poetry instruction
- o Provide the opportunity to examine and write poetry

### ACTIVITY ONE

- o What do you know about poetry?
  - What does it look like?
  - What does it sound like?
  - What does it feel like?
- o Share your ideas with the group

### WHAT IS POETRY?

- o Poetry is a form of writing that uses especially concentrated and connotative language
- o It is an art that allows the reader to see differently and develop new understandings
- o It is a creative outlet for writers

### IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING POETRY

- o Poetry is a genre that motivates and excites children to read and write
- o It lures children in and is accessible by all children

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN POETRY INSTRUCTION

- Relies heavily on concrete descriptions as opposed to abstract
- Written to express ideas, not to conform to a sense of correctness or to a notion of being right
- Spelling is not a focus
- Teachers give suggestions, not assignments
- Not one size fits all

#### THINK, PAIR, SHARE

- Think about any experiences you have had with poetry, positive or negative
- Pair up and discuss your experiences
- Share with the large group

#### BENEFITS OF TEACHING POETRY WRITING

- Accessible by all children
- It's a captivating form of writing
  - Keep students wanting more!
- Allows children to search for meaning in their writing
- Way to express feelings and thoughts

#### CHALLENGES OF TEACHING POETRY WRITING

- Not covered on standardized tests
- Lack of knowledge about HOW to teach poetry writing
- Teachers were never taught how to write poetry

#### ACTIVITY TWO

- Read the following poem
- Write down any thoughts, words or feelings you have or think of after reading it
- After taking a few moments to do so, please turn to a neighbor and share your notes

#### LISTEN TO THE MUSTN'TS

Listen to the MUSN'TS child  
Listen to the DON'TS  
Listen to the SHOULDN'TS  
The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS  
Listen to the NEVER HAVES  
Then listen close to me –  
Anything can happen, child,  
Anything can be.

-- Shel Silverstein

PROMPTS FOR THINKING ABOUT POETRY

- How did that poem make you feel?
- What images came to mind when you were listening?
- What do you think the poet was thinking about when he/she was writing?
- Does this poem remind you of anything?

ACTIVITY THREE

- Select a poem from the books at the tables
- After selecting the poem, discuss with a partner how you might present this poem to your class
- Use the reflection handout to record your thoughts

CONCLUSION

- Take your selected poem back to your classroom
- Present it to your class and have a discussion with them about it
- Complete the lesson reflection to bring back our next session

- Please complete the evaluation form before you leave today
- Thank you for your participation and  
**HAVE FUN!**

Appendix B

Poem for Large Group Discussion



Listen to the Mustn'ts

Listen to the MUSN'TS child

Listen to the DON'TS

Listen to the SHOULDN'TS

The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS

Listen to the NEVER HAVES

Then listen close to me –

Anything can happen, child,

Anything can be.

-- Shel Silverstein (1974)

Appendix C

Bibliography of Children's Poetry Books

### Bibliography of Children's Poetry Books

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- Prelutsky, J. (2002). *Scranimals*. New York: Greenwillow Books. 2002.
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Appendix D

Presenting a Poem to Your Classroom

## Presenting a Poem to Your Classroom

Title of Poem: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Trade Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some features of the poem that stand out to you? Why?

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What inspiration do you think the author was pulling from when writing the poem?

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What do you want to point out to your students? Why?

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What could your students take from this poem to use in their own writing?

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Appendix E

3-2-1 Session Evaluation/Reflection

### 3-2-1 Session Evaluation/Reflection

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Title: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3 Things I Learned

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 2 Ideas I Will Use In My Classroom

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 1 Question I Still Have/Topic I'd

Like to Know More About ...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F.**

**Presenting a Poem to Your Class Reflection**



## Presenting a Poem to Your Class Reflection

How did the discussion go? What went well?

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Did your students struggle with discussing the poem? Were they engaged in the activity?

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What would you do different next time? Did you have the opportunity to present another poem?

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**Appendix G**

**Session Two Power Point Slides**



## POETRY INSTRUCTION IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

Presented by:  
Staci Cramer-Wilkinson

### GOALS FOR THE SESSION

- Revisit the previous sessions challenge results
- Explain what poetry instruction looks like in the primary classroom
- Present a possible lesson sequence for teaching poetry writing
- Write and examine poetry

### CHALLENGE RESULTS

- Find a partner and share your lesson reflection
- Talk about these things...
  - How did it go?
  - What went well?
  - What would you do differently?
- Share insights with the large group
- Questions or comments?

### POETRY INSTRUCTION

- Poetry instruction at the primary level
  - What does this look like?
- Refer to the possible lesson sequence at your table

### LESSON ONE – WHAT IS POETRY?

- Explore what poetry is
- Brainstorm a list of what students think it is a record these thoughts on chart paper
- Read a few example poems
- Add to the list or cross things out based on what students think

### LESSON TWO – READING AND EXPLORING POETRY

- Read a number of different poems to students
- Discuss features
  - Rhyming
  - Sounds words
  - Poems in shapes
  - Size of words
- Add to or remove items from the list previously made

LESSON THREE – WRITING POETRY  
TOGETHER

ACTIVITY ONE

oLet's write a poem  
together!!

LESSONS FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX

- o These will be discussed in our future sessions together.

REVISIT LARGE GROUP POEM

- oHow will doing this differ with young writers?
- oWhat role with yours be as the teacher?
- oWhat will you do if the students are stuck?

CHALLENGE

- o Go back to your classroom and write a poem with your students in a large group setting
- o Bring the poem back to our next session
- o Fill out the lesson reflection upon completion

CONCLUSION

- oPlease fill out the session evaluation before you leave
- oSee you next time!!

## Appendix H

### Possible Lesson Sequence for Teaching Poetry in the Primary Grades

### Possible Lesson Sequence for Teaching Poetry in the Primary Grades

#### Lesson 1: What is Poetry?

Explore what poetry is with students. Brainstorm a list of what students think poetry is (i.e. rhymes, doesn't make sense, etc.). Read a few example poems and add to the list.

#### Lesson 2: Reading and Exploring Poetry

Read a number of different poems to students. Discuss different features of each poem (i.e. using sound words, different shapes and sizes of words, etc.). Add to the list previously made about what poetry is. Remove anything that students think do not belong on the list.

#### Lesson 3: Writing Poetry Together

Write a poem as a class. Begin by having students brainstorm ideas of poem topics (i.e. weather, holidays, school, etc.) After deciding on a topic, brainstorm a list of words or statements about the topic. Once the list has been compiled, help the students begin to put them together to make a poem. Once the poem is completed, read it as a class and make any changes that students may suggest. This lesson can be repeated as many times as the teacher sees fit before moving to the next lesson.

#### Lesson 4: Independent Poetry Writing

Allow students time to write independently. Students can be given blank paper, a book of blank paper, etc. Anything they can record on without being confined by lines. You may want to consider playing music, dimming the lights, or allowing students to spread around the room on the floor to provide a comfortable environment. Walk around

and help students who are stuck. Help them brainstorm a topic or help them get started. The time you allow for this is up to you and how you think the students are doing with their stamina. This lesson is repeated often. Give students time to write as often as is possible.

#### Lesson 5: Large Group Mini-Lessons (**This will be discussed during our last session**)

After students have had a chance to write, observe things they are struggling with or are beginning to try. Pick things you can focus on in a mini-lesson. Possible ideas might be:

- Using sound words
- Writing words big or small to express feelings
- Writing in a shape
- Alliteration
- Different poem forms – haiku, cinquain, limericks, acrostic, sonnet, shape

#### Lesson 6: Editing With Individual Students

This can be done while the students are doing independent writing. Meet with students to read through poems they have completed. Help them with the editing process. Point things out or make possible suggestions of ways they could change or add to a poem. You can also help them brainstorm possible future projects.

#### Lesson 7: Publishing

Allow students to publish their work. This can be done by typing up poems on the computer, having them do a final copy, or performing for a group. Any way to show case their writing!

Appendix I

Shared Writing Poetry Lesson Reflection



## Shared Writing Poetry Lesson Reflection

Date of Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_

Poetry Topic Chosen by Class: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please attach a copy of the poem to this reflection to bring to the next session.)

What went well during the lesson?

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What did you find to be challenging about guiding your students through the poetry writing process?

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What would you do differently next time?

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Appendix J

Session Three Power Point Slides



## GUIDING YOUNG WRITERS IN POETRY WRITING

Presented by:  
Staci Cramer-Wilkinson

### GOALS FOR THE SESSION

- o Explain general guidelines for assisting students with independent poetry writing
- o Explore editing student work
- o Spend time editing actual student work

### REFLECTION

- o Discuss your implementation log with a partner
- o Record any questions you still have
- o Share out with the large group
- o Let's review what you have done with the students!

### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH POETRY WRITING

- o Understand that poetry is an expression of ideas
- o Students are not conforming to an idea of correctness
- o A student's poem should not be written the way the teacher wants it
- o There is no right answer

### HOW MIGHT YOU RESPOND?

I like bananas.  
I like to eat them.  
I like the color.  
They are yellow.  
They are my favorite food.

-Anonymous

### SOME GUIDING QUESTIONS...

- o What were you thinking about when you were writing this poem? Did you have an inspiration?
- o Is there anything you would change about the poem or would like help with?
- o How can we help the reader understand what you're trying to express?
- o Is there an illustration we can add to enhance your words?
- o Can we change the look of the poem in any way to better express your thought?

YOUR TURN!

- Select a poem from the student poems provided on your table
- How might you respond to this student?
- Role play with your partner. Each of you take a turn being the student and being the teacher to go through the editing process.

CHALLENGE!

- Return to your classroom and have your students write poetry independently.
- Complete the reflection provided to you and bring it back to our next session.
- Also bring poems from three of your students to use in one of our activities.

CONCLUSION

- Please complete the evaluation provided on the tables. This will allow me to see what we still need to discuss and what I need to get more information on!

Appendix K

Student Written Poem

Student Written Poem

I like bananas.

I like to eat them.

I like the color.

They are yellow.

They are my favorite food.

-Anonymous

**Appendix L**

**Independent Writing Lesson Reflection**

## Appendix L – Independent Writing Lesson Reflection

What was the atmosphere in your classroom like during this writing? Music?  
Dim lights?

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How did students respond to the independent writing time?

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What were you doing while the students were writing?

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What will you change next time?

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Appendix M

Session Four Power Point Slides



### EXTENDING THE LEARNING

Presented by:  
Staci Cramer-Wilkinson

### GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

- Explain ways to extend the learning during poetry writing
- Spend time editing actual student work
- Plan for future lessons

### REFLECTION

- Discuss your lesson reflection with a partner.
- Record any questions still lingering
- Share with the large group!

### EXTENDING STUDENT LEARNING

- Other forms of poetry to explore...
  - Haiku
  - Cinquain
  - Limerick
  - Acrostic
  - Sonnet
  - Shape
- Possible topics to focus mini lessons on...
  - Using sound words - onomatopoeia
  - Changing the size of words or letters
  - Alliteration
  - Writing in a shape or pattern

### ACTIVITY ONE

- Break up into small groups.
- Using the student work you brought to the session, examine your students' poems.
- What feedback could you give to the writers?
- What mini lessons would be beneficial to do in the coming days?
- What future mini lessons could be done in your classroom?
- Record your ideas on the reflection form provided at your table.

### CONCLUSION

- Share information gleaned in your small group discussions with the large group.
- Please fill out a reflection form over this session and the evaluation form for the entire series of workshops.
- Thanks for your participation and all of your insights and input!

Appendix N

Extending the Learning Reflection

### Extending the Learning Reflection

What things did you notice after looking at your students' poems and the poems from your group?

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What are some possible mini-lesson topics for you to do in your classroom?

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What role do you see poetry playing in your classroom after completing this series of sessions?

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Appendix O

Final Evaluation of Teaching Poetry in the Primary Grades

## Final Evaluation of Teaching Poetry in the Primary Grades

Please answer the following questions by making a selection on the following five-point scale

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=No Opinion 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

1. The information in these sessions was presented clearly and was easy to understand.

1      2      3      4      5

2. I found these sessions to be relevant to my current teaching practices.

1      2      3      4      5

3. I learned more about poetry instruction and came away with several things I would like to try in my own classroom.

1      2      3      4      5

Comments:

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